

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

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-EMBASSY OTTAWA PRIRITY 577

USMISSION NATO PRIORITY

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USCINCEUR PRIORITY

USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 10005

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TU, GR

SUBJECT: GREEK-TURKISH AEGEAN PROBLEMS: MEETING WITH BITSIOS

REF: A) ANKARA 7120 (DTG 170527Z SEP 76)(NOTAL)

B) ANKARA 7049 (DTG 141525Z SEP 76)(NOTAL)

1. IN MY PRIVATE MEETING THIS AFTERNOON WITH FOREIGN
MINISTER BITSIOS (SEPTELS - NOTAL) WE ALSO HAD A
DISCUSSION OF GREEK-TURKISH PROBLEMS IN THE AEGEAN.
IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION, BITSIOS SAID THAT HE WOULD
BE LEAVING ATHENS ON FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, TO GO TO
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NEW YORK AND WOULD BE "AVAILABLE" ALL DAY SEPTEMBER 25TH,

26TH AND 27TH FOR POSSIBLE MEETINGS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER CAGLAYANGIL. BEGINNING TUESDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 28TH, BITSIOS SAID HE HAD AN ABSOLUTELY CLOGGED CALANDER OF MEETING ALREADY ARRANGED UNTIL HIS ANTICIPATED DEPARTURE FROM NEW YORK FOR OTTAWA ABOUT OCTOBER 3 FOR A 2-DAY OFFICIAL VISIT TO CANADA BEFORE RETURNING TO ATHENS BITSIOS SAID, HOWEVER, THAT NO FIRM MEETINGS HAD AS YET BEEN ARRANGED WITH CAGLAYANGIL IN NEW YORK.

2. BITSIOS WENT ON TO FILL ME IN ON THE BACKGROUND OF THE GREEK GOVERNMENT POSITION. HE SAID THAT FOLLOWING THE ADOPTION OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION IN NEW YORK A FEW WEEKS AGO, CAGLAYANGIL HAD SUGGESTED TO HIM THAT THEY MEET IN SWITZERLAND SEPTEMBER 10 - 14 AND AGAIN IN NEW YORK SEPTEMBER 25 - 28 FOR BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS CONCERNING THE AEGEAN. THE SEPTEMBER 10-14 MEETING HAD FALLEN THROUGH "BECAUSE THE SISMIK HAD CONTINUED" ITS RESEARCHES IN THE AEGEAN. AS FOR THE SEPTEMBER 25-28 MEETING IN NEW YORK, BITSIOS SAID HE HAD HEARD NOTHING FURTHER FROM CAGLAYANGIL AND WAS AWAITING WORD FROM HIS TURKISH COUNTERPART. HAVEING IN MIND PARAGRAPH 2, REF B, I TOLD BITSIOS THAT I WAS PERSONALLY UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT CAGLAYANGIL MIGHT SIMILARLY BE AWAITING WORD FROM BITSIOS TO RECONFIRM THE MEETING AND I INQUIRED WHETHER WE OR ANY THIRD PARTY COULD BE HELPFUL IN ANY WAY IN ARRANGING IT. BITSIOS SAID THANKS VERY MUCH BUT NO, HE WOULD PREFER TO LET MATTERS STAND AS THEY ARE FOR THE PRESENT. ONCE HE ARRIVED IN NEW YROK ON THE 24TH HE PLANNED TO HAVE THE GREEK PERMREP THERE INFORM THE TURKISH MISSION THAT HE HAD ARRIVED AND "WAS AVAILABLE" FOR TALKS WITH CAGLAYANGIL. (COMMENT: I GOT THE IMPRESSION THAT BITSIOS DID NOT WANT TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE TO CONTACT CAGLAYANGIL BECAUSE HE FEARED THE TURKISH RESPONSE WOULD BE THAT CAGLAYANGIL WOULD BE GLAD TO MEET IN NEW YORK SEPTEMBER 25, PROVIDED THE GOG "WITHDREW" ITS SUBMISSION TO THE WORLD COURT -- WHICH BITSIOS INDICATED THE GOG WOULD BE UNWILLING TO DO, ALTHOUGH IT WAS PREPARED TO AGREE THAT THE COURT "SUSPEND" CONSIDERATION

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OF THE MATTER FOR THE PRESENT.)

3. BITSIOS WENT ON TO SAY THAT EVEN IF HE MET WITH CAGLAYANGIL IN NEW YORK HE WAS FAR FROM OPTIMISTIC ABOUT POSSIBLE RESULTS. CERTAIN QUESTIONS, HE SAID, KEPT RECURRING IN HIS MIND: WOULD CAGLAYANGIL MEET MERELY FOR APPEARANCES SAKE OR WOULD HE REALLY BE PREPARED TO NEGOTIATE SOME REASONABLE SETTLEMENT OF THE AEGEAN

DISPUTE? EVEN IF CAGLAYANGIL WERE PREPARED TO NEGOTIATE AND REACH A REASONABLE AGREEMENT, WOULD THE SHAKY TURKISH COALITION GOVERNMENT SUPPORT IT OR WOULD ERBAKAN FOR EXAMPLE, DEPART THE COALITION AND WITHDRAW CONFIDENCE? EVEN IF AGREEMENT WERE REACHED AND SUPPORTED BY THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT, WHAT WOULD BE THE RESULT SOMETIME IN THE FUTURE FOR GREEK ISLANDS JUST OFF THE TURKISH COAST THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN ENCLAVED? AND SO ON.

4. BITSIOS SAID THERE HAD, IN ADDITION, BEEN ANOTHER COMPLICATING AND INCONVENIENT FACTOR. THE BULGARIAN GOVERNMENT HAD JUST PROPOSED -- IN A SECOND MESSAGE -- THAT PRIME MINISTERS CARAMANLIS AND DEMIREL COME TO SOFIA SEPTEMBER 22-24 FOR A FACE-TO-FACE MEETING. BITSIOS SAID THAT THE GREEK SIDE WAS "STUDYING" THIS BULGARIAN INITIATIVE -- AND, OF COURSE, SAW WHO AND WHAT MOTIVES LAY BEHIND IT -- BUT INDICATED HE SAW NO POSSIBILITY THAT THE INVITATION WOULD BE ACCEPTED BY BOTH PARTIES. AT THE SAME TIME HE LAMENTED THAT "THE RUSSIANS" ALWAYS SEEMED TO BE COMING UP WITH SOME NEW INITIATIVE WHILE THE ALLIES AND FRIENDS OF GREECE AND TURKEY SEEMED VIRTUALLY INCAPABLE OF BEING OF MUCH HELP. IN CHALLENGED THIS POINT AS REGARDS OUR AND ALLIED HELPFULNESS AND ASKED WHAT OTHER RUSSIAN INITIATIVES HE HAD IN MIND. I ALSO INQUIRED WHETHER HE WAS IMPLYING THAT THE U.S. OR SOME OTHER WESTERN POWER SHOULD HAVE INVITED CARAMANLIS AND DEMIREL TO A MEETING. BITSIOS SAID NO, THAT HE DID NOT REALLY THINK SUCH A MEETING BETWEEN THE TWO PRIME MINISTERS WAS TIMELY SO SOON -- ALTHOUGH CARAMANLIS HAS INDICATED PUBLICLY HIS WILLINGNESS TO MEET WITH DEMIREL -- AND FOR THE REST PREFERRED TO LET THE CONFIDENTIAL

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